

Asbestos Management



Overview

Asbestos is the name given to a group of minerals that occur naturally in the environment that were used in a wide range of building products. Many buildings constructed prior to 1990 contain asbestos materials. Some asbestos-containing materials may have also been used after this date.

Building owners and those with management control (this includes school principals and parish priests) have responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* to:

- identify asbestos in workplaces (e.g. schools) and, where reasonably practicable, clearly indicate the presence of asbestos by labelling
- record the existence of asbestos in a register
- communicate the existence of asbestos
- manage any risks associated with asbestos by removing or controlling those risks.

Managing asbestos

Employers and principals should manage any asbestos in their school by:

- ensuring all asbestos has been clearly identified by a competent asbestos consultant
- keeping the asbestos consultant's report easily accessible
- developing an asbestos register that includes:
 - the location and type of asbestos (consider using photos, diagrams or building plans to assist in accurate position identification)
 - the nature of the asbestos (friable or non-friable)
 - the condition of the asbestos
 - any work activities that may affect or cause damage or deterioration to the asbestos
- providing ready access to the asbestos register for staff and contractors (e.g. electricians, plumbers, maintenance staff, builders, painters, carpenters)
- where asbestos has been located, clearly indicating its presence and location. If reasonably practicable, this should be done by labelling
- reviewing and updating the asbestos register every five years (or earlier, if asbestos products have been removed, enclosed or sealed or additional products discovered).



Asbestos Register

The details of any asbestos products identified during an asbestos audit need to be recorded in an asbestos register which should include the:

- Location of the asbestos
- Type of asbestos
- Nature of the asbestos (friable or non-friable)
- Condition of the asbestos
- Work activities that may affect or damage the asbestos.

Asbestos registers need to be:

- Easily accessible and made available to interested staff and contractors such as electricians, plumbers, maintenance staff, builders, painters, carpenters
- Reviewed every 5 years, or if there is any change (including removal) to the asbestos
- Reviewed before any demolition or refurbishment work is undertaken.

Asbestos labelling

Asbestos in the school must be clearly identified. Different methods of indicating the presence of asbestos include:

- Using a register that records where the asbestos is located
- Placing labels directly on asbestos (if safe to do so)
- Placing colour-coded labels on asbestos and informing all employees what the labels mean
- Placing a sign at the entrance to the workplace or work area.

Managing asbestos emergencies

Asbestos emergencies occur when asbestos is discovered unexpectedly and prompt action needs to be taken. Managing an asbestos emergency involves:

- Removing people from the area and isolating it
- Informing affected people
- Seeking professional advice
- Checking the asbestos register
- Arranging to have the material tested
- Arranging for the removal of the material
- Updating records.



Managing asbestos removal

If there is identified asbestos and the school is planning to carry out demolition or refurbishment work, the asbestos needs to be removed before work starts. For a quick overview refer to [Managing the Removal of Asbestos](#).

Resources

- [Managing Asbestos Emergencies](#)
- [Managing the Removal of Asbestos](#)
- [Sample Asbestos Register](#)
- [Labelling asbestos in workplaces \(WorkSafe\)](#)
- [Information about Identification and control of asbestos in workplaces \(WorkSafe Guidance\)](#)
- [Managing asbestos in workplaces \(WorkSafe – step by step guide\)](#)
- [Managing Asbestos in the Workplace \(WorkSafe Compliance Code\)](#)
- [Asbestos in imported building products \(WorkSafe\)](#)
- www.asbestos.vic.gov.au

Legislation

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 \(Sections 21, 23\)](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 \(Part 4.3\)](#)